

## **CAREER GUIDE FOR LAWYER**

SOC Code: 23-1011

Pay Band(s): 5 and 6 ([Salary Structure](#))

**Standard Occupational Description:** Represent clients in criminal and civil litigation and other legal proceedings, draw up legal documents, and manage or advise clients on legal transactions. May specialize in a single area or may practice broadly in many areas of law.

**Lawyer positions in the Commonwealth are assigned to the following Roles in the [Hearing and Legal Services Career Group](#):**

[Hearing and Legal Services Officer II](#)

[Hearing and Legal Services Officer III](#)

While Lawyers within the Commonwealth are all located within the Hearing and Legal Services Career Group, individuals may want to pursue other opportunities within the Commonwealth depending upon individual training, education, knowledge, skills, abilities, and interests.

Other Career Group(s) that may be of interest are:

[Education Administration](#)

[General Administration](#)

[Program Administration](#)

[Law Enforcement](#)

## **SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, ABILITIES AND TASKS**

(Technical and Functional Expertise)

### **Skills**

**Note:** The technical and functional skills listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Lawyers commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the skills listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.

1. Talking to others to convey information effectively.
2. Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.
3. Persuading others to change their minds or behavior.
4. Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.
5. Communicating effectively in writing as appropriate for the needs of the audience.
6. Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
7. Considering the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one.
8. Understanding the implications of new information for both current and future problem-solving and decision-making.
9. Bringing others together and trying to reconcile differences.

10. Identifying complex problems and reviewing related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions.

### **Knowledge**

**Note:** The technical and functional knowledge statements listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Lawyers commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the knowledge listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.

#### **The Knowledge of:**

1. Laws, legal codes, court procedures, precedents, government regulations, executive orders, agency rules, and the democratic political process.
2. Structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
3. Business and management principles involved in strategic planning, resource allocation, human resources modeling, leadership technique, production methods, and coordination of people and resources.
4. Principles and methods for curriculum and training design, teaching and instruction for individuals and groups, and the measurement of training effects.

### **Abilities**

**Note:** The technical and functional abilities listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Lawyers commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the abilities listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.

#### **The Ability to:**

1. Listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.
2. Read and understand information and ideas presented in writing.
3. Communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.
4. Communicate information and ideas in writing so others will understand.
5. Speak clearly so others can understand you.
6. Apply general rules to specific problems to produce answers that make sense.
7. Tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong. It does not involve solving the problem, only recognizing there is a problem.
8. Come up with a number of ideas about a topic (the number of ideas is important, not their quality, correctness, or creativity).
9. See details at close range (within a few feet of the observer).
10. Combine pieces of information to form general rules or conclusions (includes finding a relationship among seemingly unrelated events).

### **Tasks**

**Note:** The following is a list of sample tasks typically performed by Lawyers. Employees in this occupation will not necessarily perform all of the tasks listed.

#### **Tasks**

1. Act as agent, trustee, guardian, or executor.

2. Advise clients concerning business transactions, claim liability, advisability of prosecuting or defending lawsuits, or legal rights and obligations.
3. Analyze the probable outcomes of cases, using knowledge of legal precedents.
4. Present and summarize cases to judges and juries.
5. Evaluate findings and develop strategies and arguments in preparation for presentation of cases.
6. Examine legal data to determine advisability of defending or prosecuting lawsuit.
7. Gather evidence to formulate defense or to initiate legal actions, by such means as interviewing clients and witnesses to ascertain the facts of a case.
8. Interpret laws, rulings and regulations for individuals and businesses.
9. Negotiate settlements of civil disputes.
10. Prepare and draft legal documents.

## **INTERESTED?**

Like people, occupations have traits or characteristics. These characteristics give important clues about the nature of the work and work environment, and give you an opportunity to match your own personal interests to a specific occupation. When you choose a job in an occupation that matches your own interests you have taken an important step in planning a successful and rewarding career.

The Lawyer occupation has **Enterprising, Conventional, Investigative** and **Social** characteristics as described below:

**Enterprising** — Enterprising occupations frequently involve starting up and carrying out projects. These occupations can involve leading people and making many decisions. Sometimes they require risk taking and often deal with business.

**Conventional** — Conventional occupations frequently involve following set procedures and routines. These occupations can include working with data and details more than with ideas. Usually there is a clear line of authority to follow.

**Investigative** — Investigative occupations frequently involve working with ideas, and require an extensive amount of thinking. These occupations can involve searching for facts and figuring out problems mentally.

**Social** — Social occupations frequently involve working with, communicating with, and teaching people. These occupations often involve helping or providing service to others.

## **LICENSURE, REGISTRATION, OR CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

Generally this is required for Lawyer positions in state government.

To practice law in the courts of any State or other jurisdiction, a person must be licensed, or admitted to its bar, under rules established by the jurisdiction's highest court. All States require that applicants for admission to the bar pass a written bar examination; most jurisdictions also require applicants to pass a separate written ethics examination.

To qualify for the bar examination in most States, an applicant usually must earn a college degree and graduate from a law school accredited by the American Bar Association (ABA) or the proper State authorities.

Information on Virginia's requirements may be found on the Virginia State Bar's web site:  
<http://www.vsb.org/>

## **EDUCATIONAL, TRAINING, AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

The Department of Labor provides the following information:

Lawyers, also called attorneys, act as both advocates and advisors in our society. As advocates, they represent one of the parties in criminal and civil trials by presenting evidence and arguing in court to support their client. As advisors, lawyers counsel their clients concerning their legal rights and obligations and suggest particular courses of action in business and personal matters. Whether acting as an advocate or an advisor, all attorneys research the intent of laws and judicial decisions and apply the law to the specific circumstances faced by their client.

Lawyers may specialize in a number of different areas, such as bankruptcy, probate, international, environmental law or elder law.

A significant number of attorneys are employed at the various levels of government. Lawyers who work for State attorneys general, prosecutors, public defenders, and courts play a key role in the criminal justice system. At the Federal level, attorneys investigate cases for the U.S. Department of Justice and other agencies. Government lawyers also help develop programs, draft and interpret laws and legislation, establish enforcement procedures, and argue civil and criminal cases on behalf of the government.

Formal educational requirements for lawyers include a 4-year college degree, 3 years in law school, and the passing of a written bar examination. Competition for admission to most law schools is intense. Demand for lawyers will be spurred by the growth of legal action in such areas as health care, intellectual property, international law, elder law, environmental law, and sexual harassment.

The State Council of Higher Education lists many Virginia educational institutions having a law program. The State Council of Higher Education's web site is  
<http://www.schev.edu/Students/FindaProgram.asp?from=k12>.

## **COMMONWEALTH COMPETENCIES**

Competencies are a set of identified behaviors, knowledge, skills, and abilities that directly and positively impact the success of employees and the organization. Competencies can be observed and measured. When consistently demonstrated, competencies make employees particularly effective in their work. Competencies help lay out a road map to career success. You can use the Commonwealth Competencies to help improve your individual performance by adopting behaviors that make high performing employees successful in their jobs. In this way, you can use the Commonwealth Competencies for your further professional development.

**The Commonwealth Competencies are:**

1. Technical and Functional Expertise
2. Understanding the Business
3. Achieving Results
4. Serving the Customer
5. Teamwork
6. Interpersonal and Communication Skills
7. Leadership and Personal Effectiveness

The above competencies may be applied to employees throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. They can be rank-ordered by agencies and hiring managers to represent the needs of a specific job. The rank ordering will change depending upon the occupation, an organization's priorities, the actual job requirements, and the supervisor's preferences.

Career success is both about what you do (applying your technical knowledge, skills, and ability) and how you do it (the consistent behaviors you demonstrate and choose to use) while interacting and communicating with others. Hopefully, by studying the Commonwealth competencies, identifying your developmental opportunities, and working to refine your own competence, you can take charge of your career!

For additional information about the **Commonwealth Competencies** go to: [http://jobs.state.va.us/cc\\_planningctr.htm](http://jobs.state.va.us/cc_planningctr.htm). For the competencies, we first list the competencies and then define each. Finally, we list competency indicators; to describe what successful performance looks like.

## **COMMONWEALTH CAREER PATH**

Career opportunities in the Commonwealth are not limited to moving “up” to the next highest role and pay band, changing positions, or to becoming a supervisor. That’s because most roles describe a broad group of occupationally related positions that perform a range of work that requires increased knowledge and skills. For that reason, Commonwealth roles describe the career paths within the same or higher-level role for the same or different Career Group. The broad salary range and the Commonwealth’s pay practices provide flexibility in recognizing career development and advancement. ([Salary Structure](#))

For example: **Lawyer**

PAY BAND	PRACTITIONER ROLES
5	Hearing and Legal Services Officer II
6	Hearing and Legal Services Officer III

PAY BAND	MANAGER ROLES
5	Hearing and Legal Services Manager I
6	Hearing and Legal Services Manager II
7	Hearing and Legal Services Manager III

## **Sample Career Path**

### **Hearing and Legal Services Officer II**

The Hearing and Legal Services Officer II role provides a career track for lawyers whose responsibilities range from journey level to advanced level. This career track is for lawyers that provide legal services for agencies and/or serve as advocates for specific client groups.

### **Hearing and Legal Services Officer III**

The Hearing and Legal Services Officer III role provides career tracks for lawyers who serve as experts. The lawyers provide expert legal services for agencies; or serve as advocates and attorneys for specific client groups.

### **Hearing and Legal Services Manager I**

The Hearing and Legal Services Manager I role provides career tracks for managers that administer formal and informal appeals hearings programs. Employees ensure that the programs function according to pertinent laws and regulations; develop agency program policies and procedures; and may recommend changes in statutory requirements.

### **Hearing and Legal Services Manager II**

The Hearing and Legal Services Manager II role provides career tracks for managers involved in planning and directing the administration of divisional operations for the first-level appeals process. Employees provide administrative direction to a major agency division having first level client appeals responsibility and have overall management responsibility for a staff of hearing managers, hearing officers and support staff.

### **Hearing and Legal Services Manager III**

The Hearing and Legal Services Manager III role provides career tracks for managers involved in directing staff in a two-tier adjudication process of an agency or in managing a staff that provides legal advocacy services to a specific client group.

## **ADDITIONAL OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT:**

O\*NET (Occupational Information Network)

[http://online.onetcenter.org/gen\\_search\\_page](http://online.onetcenter.org/gen_search_page)

Virginia Employment Commission

<http://www.alex.vec.state.va.us/>

Career One Stop

<http://www.careeronestop.org/>

Virginia Career Resource Network

<http://www.vacrn.net/>

Virginia State Bar

<http://www.vsb.org/>

American Bar Association,  
<http://www.abanet.org>  
Virginia Bar Association  
<http://www.vba.org/>